

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 05934 050749Z

16/53

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 L-03 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06

SIL-01 TRSE-00 DOTE-00 PM-07 NIC-01 OPR-02 DRC-01

/079 W

----- 040293

P R 031342Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1252

INFO AMCOCOUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5934

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA 1 LINES 6 AND 7

E.O. GDS

TAGS: ELAB, ETRN, IN

SUBJECT: MASS ARREST OF RAILWAY LABOR LEADERS PRECIPITATES
STRIKE

REF: NEW DELHI 5812

1. THE RAILWAY STRIKE SCHEDULED FOR MAY 8 (REFTEL) BEGAN IN PIECEMEAL FASHION WAKE OF UNION INDIGNATION OVER THE ARREST THE PREVIOUS DAY TS SOME 700 RAILWAY UNION LEADERS, INCLUDING SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER GEORGE FERNANDES. RAILWAY MINISTER L.N. MISHRA TOLD ANUPROARIOUS SESSION OF THE LOWER HOUSE ON MAY 2 THAT THE ARRESTS WERE BEGUN WITH HIS KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT, BUT HE DEFENDED THE GOI'S ARREST OF DERNANDES ON GROUNDS THAT THE LABOR LEADER HAD BEEN INCITING RAILWAY EMPLOYEES TO VIOLENCE. THE DEATH IN BOMBAY OF M.R. MALGI, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL MAZDOOR UNION, THE DAY HE WAS ARRESTED ADDED PATHOS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CHALLENGE TO RAILWAY LABOR LEADERS.

2. BY MID-DAY MAY 3 TRAIN SERVICE ON THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL RAILWAYS WAS PARALYZED, AND THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY WAS OUT ON
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 05934 050749Z

STRIKE. MRS. GANDHI RETURNED FROM HER VISIT TO IRAN THE AFTER-

NOON OF MAY 2 BUT HAS NOT MADE ANY STATEMENT ABOUT THE INCIPENT STRIKE. IT APPEARS THAT UNSCHEDULED WALKOUTS WILL CONTINUE, AND THAT A GENERAL RAILWAY STRIKE WILL BEGIN ON MAY 8 IF NOT BEFORE.

3. THE TERRITORIAL ARMY HAS BEEN ALERTED TO TAKE OVER KEY RAIL LINES IF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES CANNOT BE MOVED. THE FIRST STRINGENCY TO BE FELT WOULD BE IN COAL STOCKS, AS MANY POWER PLANTS AND FACTORIES HAVE ONLY 4-7 DAYS SUPPLY ON HAND.
MOYNIHAN

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Message Attributes

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30 JUN 2005

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